

HOW THE GOSPEL CAME TO THE KUNZ FAMILY

Compiled

By

Oliver Kunz, Ezra L. Kunz, Maxine Kunz Blazer and Thekla Kunz

Edited With A Few Changes

by

Paul Anthon-Nielson

The material for this story was gathered and compiled by Oliver Kunz, Ezra L. Kunz, Maxine Kunz Blazer, and Thekla Kunz. A few changes have been made by Paul A. Nielson.

Beat Kunz married Fronegg Hiltbrand 16 October 1575 in Diemtigen, Bern, Switzerland. He was lucky to be born in Switzerland, a freedom loving country. He was probably one of the heroic people of Switzerland that helped protect it and make it the free country it was even at that time. Freedom for Switzerland was established by two great victories: Morgarten in 1315 and Sempach in 1385--against the House of Hapsburgs. From these two struggles came the myths of William Tell and Arnold Winkelried. Between these two battles, other cantons rebelled against their lords and joined the alliance. The new members--among them, Bern, Zurich and Luzern--were city states, wealthier and more aristocratic than the original union.

This was the time of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in England.

Ulrich Zwingli's influence in Zurich was still being felt all over Switzerland. He was the leader of the Swiss Protestants of German nationality against the Catholics. He corresponded with Martin Luther. He was against the preaching of indulgences.

John Calvin had lived just previous to this time. He was the originator of the Presbyterian faith. He did his reforming in France but when Francis I got after him he fled to Geneva, Switzerland where, with the exception of a short banishment spent at Strassburg, he spent the rest of his life preaching and writing. This was an interesting time to have lived, and Beat and Fronegg Kunz were probably interested in all these happenings.

Beat and Fronegg Hiltbrand Kunz had two children, Anna christened 10 March 1577 at Diemtigen, Bern, Switzerland, and Johannes who was also known by Hans, christened 3 May 1579 in Diemtigen. On 30 October 1597, Hans or Johannes married Magdalena Stucki in Diemtigen. They had eleven children. Their last child, Jakob, was christened 18 May 1623 at Diemtigen, where thirty years later on 14 October 1653 he married Elsbeth Knubel, christened 19 March 1626 at Zweisimmen, Bern, Switzerland, a daughter of Peter Knubel and Dichtli Stalder. This was the time of Shakespeare in England and also the time of the King James translation of the Bible. It was during Jakob's lifetime that the last portion of the great religious wars was fought--just a century after Martin Luther had posted his theses at Wittenberg. This was known as the Thirty Years War--1616-1648. This was the most destructive and terrible war in all history until our present day World War I. Half the population and two-thirds of the movable property of Germany were swept away. The war was closed by the Peace of Westphalia. The treaty was drawn up by a congress of ambassadors from nearly every European power. This congress expressly recognized the independence of Switzerland.

Under this congress every sovereign prince in Germany was to choose his religion and his subjects were to have three years to conform to his choice or to withdraw from his realm. Many of the South German Protestants were then driven into exile by their

Catholic lords. This was why the Pennsylvania Dutch came to America, also why so many Germans came before the Revolutionary War. This was near the time when the Puritans landed at Plymouth Rock.

Jakob Kunz and Elsbeth Knubel Kunz had two children. Their second son born between 1655 and 1659 in Diemtigen, Bern, Switzerland, married Elsbeth Widmer on 9 November 1683 at Diemtigen. She was christened 1 June 1662 at Diemtigen, a daughter of Joseph Widmer and Marie Knutti. She died 20 Jan 1692 at Diemtigen.

Niklaus Kunz and Elsbeth Widmer had four children. Christian, the youngest in the family, was christened 15 March 1691 at Diemtigen. He married Maria Schuetz, of Erlenbach, Bern, on 10 January 1716 in Diemtigen. Maria was the daughter of Peter Christian Schuetz and Margreth Dubi. She was christened in Erlenbach on 15 October 1693 and died 26 September 1755 in Diemtigen. This was the time when John Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* and John Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*. The famous Habeas Corpus Act was passed to protect people against false imprisonment. Stuarts were the kings of England.

Christian and Maria Schuetz Kunz had twelve children. Niklaus, who was the ninth child in the family, christened 20 August 1730 at Diemtigen, married Margaretha Klossner 12 February 1762 at Diemtigen. Margaretha was christened 24 May 1733 at Diemtigen, a daughter of Jakob Klossner and Barbara Klossner. She gave birth to seven children between 1763 and 1774 and on 30 April 1805 she died at Diemtigen. In 1806, Niklaus married Susanna Trummer of Frutigen, Bern, who had been divorced from Christian Andrist. On 5 November 1808, Niklaus passed away at Diemtigen.

Jakob Kunz, the seventh child of Niklaus Kunz and Margaretha Klossner Kunz was born 3 December 1774 at Diemtigen, and christened 11 December 1774 at Diemtigen. He married Margaretha Klossner, a daughter of Jakob Klossner and Maria Waeffler, on 6 January 1798 at Diemtigen. Margaretha was born 27 January 1779 at Diemtigen, and christened 31 January 1779 at Diemtigen. Jakob Kunz and Margaretha Klossner Kunz had ten children and two and one half years after the birth of their youngest child, Peter, Margaretha Klossner Kunz died on 25 December 1818 at Diemtigen. On 16 June 1837 Jakob married Susanna Weissmueller at Diemtigen. She was the widow of Johannes Zumbrunnen.

In those days they learned to read and write from the Bible and studied it in school from cover to cover. Jakob and Susanna could both see from studying the Bible that their minister's teachings were not the same teachings as the Savior's. So they made an agreement that the first one to die would come back and report to the other whether the true gospel was on the earth.

After Jacob's death at Zwischenflueh, Bern, on 13 November 1841, his wife sat by the side of his coffin and on the third day she was disheartened to think that he had failed to come and bring the report to her. She arose from her chair and said, "I guess he is not coming to let me know." She had no more than said this, when she heard his voice

and he said, "Oh yes, I have been here all this time, but I could not speak until you spoke first. The true gospel is on the earth and our posterity will accept it."

Jakob Kunz was the father of Johannes Kunz I.

Way over in Europe is a little country called Switzerland. It is a very small country, only about one fifth the size of the state of Utah. Switzerland may be tiny, but it is one of the most beautiful countries in the whole world. Every year tourists from all over the world go there to see the beautiful mountains called The Alps and the many beautiful lakes and fertile valleys.

Almost in the middle of Switzerland, right at the foot of the Alps is a little town called Diemtigen, in the Canton of Bern. Let us imagine we were in this little town of Diemtigen in the year 1862. As we follow a mountain trail along side of a small stream winding back up into the mountains our feet become weary, but as we think of the many feet belonging to the many generations of our ancestors who have walked over that same trail our steps become lighter. Walking was still the main means of transportation for these mountain people. About four or five miles from Diemtigen we come to a little valley, so small we wouldn't even call it a valley, just a wide part of the canyon. Here in this little valley we find the home of Johannes Kunz I, and as we knock on the door we are greeted by a man about fifty-eight years old. He is a kind looking man with blue eyes and blonde hair, about five feet ten inches tall and weighs about 175 pounds. We are invited in and made welcome; we meet his wife Rosina Katharina Klossner Kunz and his twin daughters Rosina and Katheryn. Knowing we are hungry after our long trip this good family, as has always been the Kunz custom, soon serve us a tasty meal of brown bread, butter and cheese.

By this time we have discovered that Rosie is suffering from a disease of the spine. The doctors do not know what she has nor how to cure it. They have told her she will never be well again as long as she lives.

Now that we are rested, Johannes wants us to meet the rest of his family who are married but live nearby. There is Magdalena who is just older than the twins and is married to David Widmer. Next we come to the home of the younger son, Christian and meet his wife Susanna and their two daughters. From here we come to the home of the oldest son, Johannes. As we come nearer we see children playing inside the picket fence. There are nine children altogether ranging in age from eighteen months to eighteen years and as we enter the house we meet Johannes and his wife Rosina Knutti Kunz. Now you will notice that both the father and son are named Johannes and both their wives Rosina. So the story will not be confusing we will speak of the son and his wife as grandfather and grandmother, as the story is mostly about them. The father and mother we will call Johannes and Rosina.

These people in Switzerland loved their beautiful country. They had not luxuries but they were happy. They earned their living by milking cows and making cheese.

The summers were short and the winters long and cold up here in the mountains, so the people worked hard during the summer to store food for themselves and their animals to last through the winter. Even the women and children helped in the hay fields. Because of the steep slopes on the mountain sides, all the hay had to be cut by hand, then raked and tied into bundles so the men could carry it on their backs into the shed where it was stored.

About this time Rosie heard of a church organization in the city of Thun, just ten miles away, that had the power of healing and she felt that if she could find them she could be healed of the terrible disease she had. So Johannes took Rosie and went to Thun. Here they met two Mormon missionaries, one of them named Ulrich Buehler, who told them how the gospel had been restored in these latter days.

Johannes immediately recognized this to be the true and everlasting gospel, and on the 22nd of June 1862 he was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Rosie was also baptized and through the power of the priesthood and her own faith in our Heavenly Father, she was made entirely well.

Rosie and her father returned to their home in the mountains only to learn that the people there hated the Mormons and felt very rebellious toward them. Therefore, they didn't tell anyone of their having been baptized.

The following December a little baby boy came to the home of Grandfather Johannes and Grandmother Rosina Kunz. They named him Robert. This made ten children for them.

Almost a year had passed since the Kunz's were baptized and Elder Buehler had heard no more from them, so he and his companion decided to visit them and see if anything was wrong. As the two missionaries came up into the little valley, they made it known that they were Mormons and the news soon spread. The men of the valley met together in an angry mob and decided they would run those missionaries out of the community. Our grandfather, John Kunz II joined with the mob, and they started for the home of Johannes Kunz I.

The door on Johanneses house was built in two sections so the top half could be opened without opening the bottom half. When the mob assembled in front of Johannes's home, they made such a noise that he opened the top half of the door to see who was there. There in front of him were his neighbors, his relatives, those he thought were his friends. Very calmly and without any sign of fear he folded his arms on the bottom half of the door and asked them quietly what they wanted.

"Are those Mormon missionaries in there?" asked the mob.

"Yes", he answered. "What do you want with them?"

"We want them so we can run them out of this neighborhood."

"You'll have to go over my dead body to get them," he answered.

Then he looked out over the mob and saw his son (John II).

"John," he said, "What are you doing here? You go home and mind your own business." His voice was kind but firm. John (II) dropped his head in shame and went home. Johannes then talked to the rest of the mob as he would have done to a group of misbehaving children, until finally they all went home. The people still remained bitter toward the Mormons but the missionaries were allowed to come and go without being molested. During this visit of the two missionaries, Rosina Katharina Klossner Kunz, the wife of Johannes I, and Katharina, Rosie's twin were baptized. This took place on 12 June 1863.

In 1868 two new missionaries, Willard B. Richards and Karl G. Maeser, came up into the little valley. After attending some of their meetings, John Kunz III and his wife, Magdalena Straubhaar, were converted to the Gospel and were baptized on the 15th of November 1868. His wife had been converted through Rosina and Katharina. Although she hadn't joined before, it was through the influence of her and Rosina and Katharina that they persuaded John to attend meetings conducted by Elders Richards and Maeser.

John II felt so badly when he heard that his eldest son had joined the Church that he said, "If I die don't even let him know I am dead." His father and mother talked together often and wondered just how they could show John III that he had done wrong by joining the Church. They finally decided to ask him to come and get them a load of wood. He would have to stay all night to do this and that would give them an opportunity to talk to him and show him his mistake.

To get a load of wood John had to cut two long poles and pile the load of wood on these two poles and tie it on firmly, then he would take the poles one in each hand and come down the mountain between the two poles dragging the load of wood behind. He got an especially large load to show them he could get a large load even if he was a Mormon.

When he returned with this large load of wood, his mother had a very good supper for him. In fact she had cooked the best she had, because she still loved him dearly. After the dishes were cleared away, his father and mother began to ask him questions and try to prove to John how wrong he was. He whipped them on every point as long as they stayed with the scriptures, but then his father became angry and resorted to falsehoods and abuse. Just before John went to bed he said very fervently, "I know that this gospel is true."

The next morning when John was ready to leave, his mother said to him with tears in her eyes, "I know you are right, my son."

His father hadn't come that far yet, but as he shook hands with John bidding him farewell he said, "Next time those gentlemen come (meaning the missionaries) to your locality, let me know and I will come and listen to them."

"They will come to your home if you will permit it," John answered. His father wasn't too happy, but he told John to have them call.

Karl G. Maeser and his companion came through deep snow in the middle of winter to see grandfather John Kunz II. After Elder Maeser had explained the gospel to him he knew it was true, and so on 27 February 1869, John Kunz II and his wife, Rosina Knutti Kunz, were baptized under one condition, that he not be asked to leave his home in Switzerland, and come to America. Elder Maeser granted this wish very freely.

After he had been baptized, Pres. Maeser came up to him and said, "Brother Kunz, if you have had any friends you have lost them today."

This was in February 1869, and in August 1870 John Kunz II and his wife, Rosina Knutti Kunz, and all the unmarried children were in Salt Lake City. John III and his sister Rosina, the two eldest children, did not come at that time. John III didn't come at that time because he was in the army for a certain period of time of which he had to serve. Rosina didn't come because her husband, Johannes Bischoff, was not yet converted. Gottfried, Christian, and Samuel later helped finance John's trip, Gottfried doing the biggest part. Rosina and her husband and family also came over later.

Two children of Johannes Kunz I, Christian Kunz and Magdalena Kunz Widmer, and their families never did join the Church and remained in Switzerland.

(From here on the story is told by Robert Kunz, youngest son of John Kunz II and Rosina Knutti Kunz. A few notes from the Swiss and German Mission History have also been added.)

When we left our old home to come to America, it was a nice summer morning. It was with mingled emotions that we left for we were practically sure we would never return. We walked from the black cherry tree, father leading, the kids following in their order. John King took us all to the station in a light rig, that is, all except John III and Rosie.

During our trip Karl Kroff took we boys on a boat ride on Lake Thun. The steamer came along so close to our boat that it almost tipped our boat over. When Father heard about the boat ride he really took us on the carpet.

From here we went to Bern and Basel. At Basel we had a big dinner at the Red Ox Restaurant. This was on July 5, 1870. On Wednesday, July 6, the emigrants left Basel about 10 A.M. in two railroad cars; we arrived in Mannheim, Germany about 7 P.M. and stopped at the Hotel Zur Goldenen Gans, where we met several German Saints from Munich and Dresden who joined our company.

On July 7, we boarded the steamer Victoria descending the Rhine River to Cologne. While on this steamer a little girl was born who received the name Victoria. In Duesseldorf, Germany we changed boats. On Friday, the 8th the boat arrived in Rotterdam, Holland. We stopped at the Hotel Zur Stadt Antwerpen. On the evening of Saturday the 9th we boarded the steamer Lord Cardigan, arriving in Grimsby, England on Monday the 11th.

All I remember about Rotterdam and Grimsby was seeing a lot of boats. They switched the cars with big Belgian horses.

We left Grimsby the same day for Liverpool, England, arriving there about 5 P.M. and were permitted to embark at once on the ship Manhattan, which left Liverpool Wednesday, July 13th, for New York City.

Elder Karl G. Maeser had charge of the whole company comprising 245 souls; he put Elder Lewis M. Grant in charge of the Swiss Saints.

About 11 A.M. of July 26, 1870, we entered Castle Garden, New York, where we met Brother Staines; 30 saints from the state of Pennsylvania were added to the company at this time.

When they sent the boxes down off the boat (at Castle Garden) they only sent one box for us. Mother told them we had two. They tried to tell her we had only one, but she was sure we had two so she stayed right by the slide where they sent the boxes down until after a long search they finally found our other box.

While we were at the Castle Garden, an Englishman came in and upon learning that we were Swiss, he gave each of us a Bible.

On Wednesday July 27 at 2 P.M. they left Castle Garden in eight railroad cars, journeying through Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Omaha. In every one of these places they had to change cars and Bro. Maeser had to wrangle with the railroad officers to keep seven cars, as they wanted to reduce them to six.

When we pulled out of Omaha our train hit a railroad tie that two men had laid on the track. The train was wrecked and we were delayed for 24 hours. The two men who put the tie on the track were sent to jail.

When the train approached the Rocky Mountains it had such a heavy load that it could not travel very fast. Many of the men would hold on the rods and run along with the train. Two men let go and were left behind and the train had to wait for them to catch up with the rest. We continued on and at one station heard loud talking outside the train. Then a big engineer and a large Irishman came into our car. When they entered, Karl G. Maeser said, "Throw them out." The women and children crowded into one bunch and the men threw them out of the door from which they had entered. This was an emigrant car and they were not to come into it.

In Farmington, Utah we were met by the First Presidency: Brigham Young, George A. Smith, and Daniel H. Wells. While the train was running, Brother Maeser had the honor to make the saints acquainted with the First Presidency, they shaking hands with every one in the car.

When we reached Salt Lake City, friends and relatives came to meet everybody but the Kunzes. We had no friends and relatives in this country.

Presiding Bishop, Edward Hunter, could tell we were broke, so he inquired as to what Father's occupation was. When he found out that he was a cheese maker from Switzerland and the Alps he said, "I have no place to put them or no place for them to go."

Bishop Hunter and Elder Maeser went to Brigham Young. He remembered that at Bear Lake there were many good cows with big bags and no one to take care of the milk. Brigham Young said, "This fellow will find a way to take care of this milk better than it ever has been taken care of before. Now we will have an outlet for this milk." They had no freezing units, and the products were terrible they were trying to sell to the public because there was no one to take care of it properly. Bishop Hunter said to Brigham Young, "They have no means to go any place." "Put them on the train and send them to Ogden. Have the Bishop in Ogden ready with two teams and send them to Bear Lake," President Young told him.

The teams met us at Ogden and took us the same day to Wellsville. While we were camped there in the evening, four of the boys walked to Providence to see a distant woman relative of ours. These boys were Christian, Samuel, Gottfried, and David. Sister Herzog was the lady. It was much farther than they had thought and when they got there they were so tired that they stayed all night. The next morning they came down to the fork in the road and met father and the rest of us. During the evening and morning of visiting, Mr. Herzog had convinced them that they should go no farther, so when they met the wagon they said, "we will go no farther."

It was hard for us to make them understand that we would not go to Bear Lake this fall, but finally after repeating many times, "No go, No go," it was decided that we stay and the wagons were sent back to Ogden and we went to Providence. Mr. Herzog said the threshing would soon be on and we could get plenty of work. He said if we should stay he would go over to Bear Lake and help us get out the house logs. This was in August.

The older boys got work on the threshing jobs, but had to take wheat for their pay. The three youngest gleaned in the fields. These younger ones were Jake, Will, and Robert. We would each get a sack of heads in a day. Then we would take the sack to the thresher, have it threshed and take the wheat to the mill and get it ground into flour.

We couldn't find a house in Providence big enough for such a big family so father finally found one in Logan down near where the O.S.L. Depot now is located. The house was 14 by 16 feet in the clear. Father built a lower and an upper berth.

During the time the family lived in this little house, we got one quart of milk for all of us that winter each day. We had to walk eight blocks one way, that was two miles,

but the milk was given to us by a Mr. Mosiman. It was David's job to get it most of the time.

Father injured himself lifting a fork full of hay. As he lifted the fork full of hay the rack floor gave way under his weight and he fell through the rack and hurt himself. Inflammatory rheumatism set in and he was laid up all winter. After being laid up three or four months he had a dream that if Henry Flamm would baptize him for his health he would get well.

About a month after he had this dream Henry Flamm came to visit him. Father told him the dream. Brother Flamm said, "Why didn't you make this known? In all probability you would have been well by now, but it is not too late to do it. We will do it right away." He went home, got his team and wagon with hay, straw and blankets in it. Then he came after father. Father couldn't walk a step. They took him up to the center mill and carried him down to the flume of the mill. Henry baptized him in that cold mountain water for his health, and then carried him back to his bed in the wagon. Then they took him home and put him to bed again. After he got back to bed, he had a terrible sweat for three or four days, and from that time on he began to get well fast.

The well at the house had not been used for some time. We used the water from it and Samuel and I both became seriously ill with Typhoid Fever. We were sick for six weeks. Dr. Cranney took care of us. I was too sick to be baptized when I became eight years old.

Bishop Budge who was presiding Bishop of Bear Lake Stake was living in Providence for the winter. In the spring he came to see us and Samuel and David worked for a month for two teams to take us to Bear Lake. We had to go around by Soda Springs. Bishop Budge went with us. He had two cows; this gave us plenty to eat, so we enjoyed the trip.

When we got to Bear Lake, Bishop Budge left the cows with us. The first night we stopped at Gentile Valley. The second night we stayed at Soda Springs. The third night we reached Bennington and stayed at Bishop Moore's who was the first bishop in Bennington. The next night we went on to Ovid.

Mr. Herzog, Christian, Gottfried, and David, had gone over the fall before and got logs out for the two rooms.

When we got to Ovid, Bishop Budge said, "Keep these cows and I will see that you get help." The next day Herbert Horsley and J.U. Stucki came with an ax and saw to help us build the cabin. They put up a room a day. Father, Samuel, and David helped these two men do this work. Both of these men were handy with logs. Nels Peterson helped with the doors and windows. From here on we got along fine. We bought a wagon and a yoke of oxen. Everything went fine.

In 1871 we had a late spring. Ollie Peterson went ahead on the thirteenth of May to show us how to take the cows toward the range in Bern, Idaho without getting them stuck in snow drifts. Compared with the winter we spent in Logan we were in milk and honey. I got permission to go herding with Will and Jake for one day only. During the day we built the first shanty or lean-to in Bern, in Bear Hollow. It was a nice place for the boys to go lay in the shade while herding the cows. Miles Weaver killed a bear here, that's why it was called Bear Hollow.

As you remember, my brother John didn't come with us. He finally came later and brought with him my grandmother, Rosina Katharina Klossner. Grandmother died in Logan. Rosina and Katharina, the twins, came in the same company with Grandmother and John.

My father made the first cheese in Bear Lake County. He borrowed a big kettle the folks in Ovid had used to make soap in and in 1871 he made the first cheese. In the spring of 1874 they built a cheese factory and made Swiss cheese.

In 1875, Bishop Edlefson said it would be better if they would move to Bern. The range was better. He had squatters rights to it and would sell it cheap. I don't think he paid more than \$50 for the whole of Bern. This was all but the land north of Henry Kunz's place. This land north of Henry Kunz's was bought from William Rich by Christian Kunz for twenty head of steers. William Rich represented Apostle Charles C. Rich, who owned the land.

In 1875, Father settled on the town site of Bern proper and named it after the capitol of Switzerland. In 1876, father hired Ephraim Jones to come and teach school in Bern. The students were his children: Jacob, William, Robert, Katharine, and David.

My brother John and his son William J. were in Emigration Canyon cutting poles when a friend rode up on horseback and told John that his and David's names had been read in conference the day before as worthy men to go on a mission to Switzerland, and they had to leave in two weeks. John returned home immediately and sent a messenger to David at Logan. Davis was visiting with his wife's folks at the time. He hurried home as quickly as possible. These two filled an honorable mission in Switzerland. They were the only two of the original family to ever return to their old home